

**REMARKS**

Entry of this amendment, and reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of rejection are respectfully requested in light of the above amendments and the following remarks. Claims 1-4 remain pending herein. Claims 3 and 4 remain withdrawn from consideration.

(1) Claim 1 has been amended to overcome rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph regarding the cited repetition of “component” and “components” in the preamble.

(2) Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over European Patent Publication DE 198 35 876, hereafter referred to as “DE ‘876”. Applicants respectfully traverse this ground of rejection for the reasons indicated below.

Instant claims 1 and 2 recite that the Y slide/slides are *independently drivable* in the X direction. Please refer to the lone figure in this application, where it can be easily seen that Y slides 8, 9, 10 and 11 have different amounts of space between them in an X direction due to their ability to move independently in the X direction.

In contrast, DE’876 discloses that all *the guide rails 22, if they move at all in the X-direction, said guide rails 22 would move as a unit with each other.* Accordingly there is no independent movement of the Y-slides in the X direction. As the circuit boards move on the tracks 2 in the X direction, there is no need even to move the guides 22 in the X direction.

In addition, please refer to Fig. 2 of DE’876 that shows that guide rails 22 are evenly spaced. The distances P1s and P2s are the same. Applicants are of the opinion

that guides 22 remain fixed in the X direction, and the heads 30 slide along in the Y direction (please see Figure 5 of DE'876).

Applicants also wish to rebut the statement in the Office Action that casters 12 shown in Fig. 1 of DE'876 allegedly show the guides 22 to be independently drivable in both the X direction and any other direction.

Applicants first refer to Fig. 5 of DE'876, where a guide 22 is the long piece of wood (steel, plastic, etc.) upon which blocks 36 slide in the Y direction. Fig. 5 shows there is no movement of guides 22 in the X direction relative to the heads 30.



Applicants secondly refer to Fig. 1, and the casters 12 cited in the Office Action. Applicants respectfully note that the front end of the machine 10 is prevented from lateral or X direction movement, and even if it were separated from the main portion 1, movement of portion 10 would not affect the position of the guide rails 22. **Please refer to Fig. 3 for proof**, as it can be seen that *the front of the machine 10, having feeders 11, is not in contact with the guides 22*. The guides 22 are fixed by cross-pieces 21 on their ends (Fig. 1 shows cross-pieces 21), so even if someone were to have pulled the portion 10 away from the center portion 1, it would have no effect on the displacement of the guides 22 at all. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that DE'876 fails to disclose or suggest independent movement of the Y slides in the X direction. Nor would an artisan with knowledge of DE'876 have gleaned any suggestion or motivation such that claims 1 and 2 would have obvious to a person of ordinary skill in the art. For at least this reason, instant claims 1 and 2 are believed to be patentable.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all the present claims are patentable in view of the cited references. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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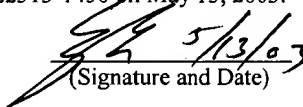
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